



DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LT. GOVERNOR

KEVIN M. BURKE  
SECRETARY

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*  
*Department of Fire Services*

*P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road*

*Stow, Massachusetts 01775*

*(978) 567~3100 Fax: (978) 567~3121*



STEPHEN D. COAN  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THOMAS P. LEONARD  
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

For Immediate Release:      October 4, 2007  
Contact:      Jennifer Mieth, (978) 567-3381

**State Fire Marshal Launches Fire Prevention Week, October 7-13, 2007**  
**Asks Residents to Hold Fire Drill at Home**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, in launching Fire Prevention Week, asked residents to hold fire drills at home. Coan said, "This year's theme 'It's Fire Prevention Week, Practice Your Home Escape Plan' reminds us how important it is to actually practice our home escape plans." He added, "Residents who have planned and practiced a home fire escape plan are more prepared and will be more likely to survive a fire. This is especially true for children." Fire escape plans should include two ways out of each room and a meeting place outside.

According to data from the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS), there were 30,198 fires reported in Massachusetts during 2006 causing 44 civilian deaths, 386 civilian injuries, 541 firefighter injuries and an estimated \$184 million in property damage. Coan said, "This is the lowest number of fire deaths on record since World War II. Smoke alarms and public fire education have contributed to this significant decline."

The Massachusetts fire service is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all those living in and visiting our state and fire is a serious public safety concern both locally and nationally. Homes are the locations where people are at greatest risk from fire. In Massachusetts in 2006, there were 12,507 residential building fires.

Coan said, "This week, take a moment to test your smoke alarms, give them fresh batteries and hold a fire drill at home." He added, "These simple actions can keep us safer from fire during Fire Prevention Week and year-round."

State Fire Marshal Coan offers the following tips for home fire escape planning:

- Develop a fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room and a family meeting place outside.
- Make sure your plan allows for any specific needs in your household. If everyone knows what to do, everyone can get out quickly.
- Practice your plan, at least twice a year.

- Some studies have shown that some children and adults may not awaken to the sound of a smoke alarm; they may need help waking up.
- If the smoke alarm sounds: Go to your closest exit, and if there is smoke on your way out, turn and use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit. Don't take time to pick up belongings; just get out and help others get out. Move fast but stay calm.

For more information about fire safety or home escape planning, contact your local fire department, the Department of Fire Services at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) or 1-877-9 NO-FIRE (1-877-966-3473), or the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

**Commemorating a conflagration**

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.